

Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

PRESENT: Lance Terpenney - Town of Christiansburg
Leslie Hagar-Smith - Town of Blacksburg for Ron Rordam
Debbie Freed - VT for Steve Mouras
Adele Schirmer - Town of Blacksburg (2:40 PM)
Doug Marrs - Montgomery County
Craig Meadows - Montgomery County
Dan Brugh - BCM MPO
Randal Gwinn - Recording Secretary
Richard Caywood - VDOT (Salem)
Rebecca Martin - Blacksburg Transit
Michael St. Jean - VT Montgomery Regional Airport Authority
Tammye Davis - Federal Highway Administration (by phone)

ABSENT: Richard Ballengee - Town of Christiansburg
Steve Mouras - Virginia Tech
Jeff Sizemore - Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Tony Cho - Federal Transit Administration
Ron Rordam - Town of Blacksburg
Eli Sharp - NRVPMC

NON-MPO PRESENT:

David Clark - VDOT (Christiansburg)
Kevin Byrd - NRVPMC

I. DECLARATION OF A QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER

Dan Brugh declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 2 PM, then issued a warm welcome to our new members Craig Meadows and Kevin Byrd.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Dan asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda.

On a motion by Richard Caywood, seconded by Doug Marrs, and carried unanimously, the agenda was approved.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 11, 2009

Dan asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the June 11, 2009 meeting.

On a motion by Lance Terpenney, seconded by Doug Marrs, and carried unanimously, the minutes from the June 11, 2009 meeting were approved.

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2009-2010

In accordance with the bylaws of the MPO, officers are elected for a one-year term. Officers are eligible for re-election and each of the officers must be from different jurisdictions.

Current officers: Lance Terpenney, Chairman and Adele Schirmer, Vice Chairman

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Dan announced that the floor was open to receive nominations for Chairman. (No seconds are required for nominations).

Doug Marrs moved to nominate Lance Terpenney.

There were no other nominations.

Dan asked for a motion to close nominations.

On a motion by Craig Meadows, seconded by Richard Caywood and carried unanimously, nominations were closed.

Dan called for a vote on the nominations for Chairman.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Lance Terpenney by unanimous vote hereby is elected as Chairperson of the MPO Policy Board for Fiscal Year 2009-2010, or until a successor is elected.

At this point Dan turned over control of the meeting to Lance.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Lance announced that the floor was open to receive nominations for Vice Chair. (No seconds are required for nominations).

Doug Marrs moved to nominate Adele Schirmer.

There were no other nominations.

Lance asked for a motion to close nominations.

On a motion by Craig Meadows, seconded by Richard Caywood and carried unanimously, nominations were closed.

Lance called for a vote on the nominations for Vice Chair.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Adele Schirmer by unanimous vote hereby is elected as Vice Chairperson of the MPO Policy Board for Fiscal Year 2009-2010, or until a successor is elected.

V. SELECTION OF REGULAR MEETING DATE

Lance stated that the current meeting date and time is from 2 – 4 PM on the first Thursday of the month then asked for a motion to set a new date and time or continue with the current ones.

Craig Meadows moved to keep the current date and time and Leslie Hager-Smith seconded the motion.

There were no other motions and Lance called for a vote to accept the current date and time for use in the upcoming year.

BE IT RESOLVED, by unanimous vote the regular meetings of the MPO Policy Board for the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 shall be 2 PM on the 1st Thursday of each month at the Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke Street in Christiansburg.

VI. PUBLIC ADDRESS

There being no speakers, the public address session was closed.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Amendment # 1 to the 2009-10 UPWP

Dan explained that due to an increase in the allocation for Transit Planning to be received from VDRPT for \$4,662, an amendment is needed to the 2009-10 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The TAC has developed a revision to the 2009-10 UPWP that has been advertised for 30 days in the newspapers, sent to the MPO Interested Parties and Environmental Regulatory Agencies, the MPO email list, and posted on the MPO website. No comments were received and now the TAC recommends approval.

At this point Lance asked for comments on the proposed amendment and there were none.

On a motion by Doug Marrs, seconded by Richard Caywood, and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, the allocation of Transit Planning Funds for 2009-10 was increased by VDRPT by \$4662 to \$87,818, and

WHEREAS, as a result of the increase the TAC developed Amendment # 1 to the 2009-10 UPWP; and

WHEREAS, the Request for Comment was advertised in The Roanoke Times and News Messenger for thirty days and posted on the MPO website; and

WHEREAS, Comments were also solicited from the MPO Email list, the MPO Interested Parties, and the Governmental Regulatory Agencies; and

WHEREAS, No comments were received, and

WHEREAS, the Technical Advisory Committee recommends approval of Amendment # 1.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board hereby approves Amendment # 1 to the FY 2009-10 Unified Planning Work Program.

IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dan presented the group with his report as follows:

A. SmartWay bus update

New buses are badly needed to replace the present aging fleet and fare increases are desired to help offset some of the cost of purchasing them. Public hearings were held on September 16th and 17th to gather comments concerning these proposed fare increases. During the hearings, Valley Metro General Manager Carl Palmer gave a formal presentation, explaining the reasons behind the requested increases. In addition, an example of the new replacement MCI coach was on display for public viewing. These coaches are 57 passenger ADA compliant, with WIFI and 120 Volt AC outlets for use with laptops and LED displays for informational displays. We will be sending out copies of the summary of the public hearings to the Policy Board when they become available to us.

Our tracking information and graphs reveal a 250% increase in ridership since the tracking began in 2005 and we are confident that when the Park & Ride lot in Salem Virginia is upgraded we will see another increase.

It is our hope to have the new coaches and fares in place by January of 2010; however, by request from Virginia Tech the new coaches will run as special shuttles between the Blacksburg and the Roanoke Airport during the Thanksgiving holiday break.

At this point Richard commented that the Salem Park & Ride (exit 140) work should begin in two weeks. He also requested that the SmartWay ridership graphs cease tracking game day traffic to make them easier to interpret. Due to the need for this data by Virginia Tech and Blacksburg Transit, it was agreed that only those parties would receive that data in the future.

B. VAMPO – Statewide MPO Association formation

Dan summarized the contents of the VAMPO White Paper handed out in the meeting materials and explained that the initiative came about as a result of the perceived VDOT indifference to MPO input. Acting on the request by the General Assembly, Virginia MPOs have met to define the mission statement and produce the VAMPO White Paper, the content of which has the support of all the MPO Directors. At this point Dan asked the MPO Policy Board to approve the resolution supporting the VAMPO concept. Lance asked Kevin if he was already aware of the initiative to which Kevin replied yes. Lance then asked if the BCMA MPO was the only Virginia MPO not based in a PDC to which both Kevin and Dan replied yes.

Lance then called for a motion to approve the resolution to support the VAMPO concept.

On a motion by Craig Meadows, seconded by Doug Marrs, and carried unanimously,

WHEREAS, The Virginia General Assembly called for the formation of an association of Virginia's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in HJR 756; and,

WHEREAS, HJR 756 requested that the Secretary of Transportation assist the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions and the Transportation Planning Board for the National Capital Area with the determination of the scope of Virginia Association of MPOs activities and responsibilities best suited to the professional needs of the Commonwealth of Virginia or adopt other measures to enhance the effectiveness, professionalism and confidence of the State's MPO organizations; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions has empanelled an ad hoc committee to develop a recommended organization structure for a Virginia Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (VAMPO); and,

WHEREAS, the formation of VAMPO will allow Virginia's MPOs to: 1) More effectively cooperate with state transportation agencies, 2) More effectively exchange best practices and other useful information, and 3) Recommend legislation or other policies that will allow MPOs to be more effective and efficient with the resources they have;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery Area MPO endorses the concept of the formation of a Virginia Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (VAMPO); and,

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery Area MPO encourages the VAPDC to complete its organizational recommendations for VAMPO and report back to Virginia's MPOs once the recommendations are completed.

C. 2008-09 Audit

The MPO Audit for 2008-09 is underway with Finance requesting and receiving materials for the Auditors to review.

D. Franklin Street/Cambria Street intersection study update

This study is nearing completion however new ideas are still coming in. The Town of Christiansburg just made a good suggestion that Joe Springer, our on call consultant, said looked promising. Lance commented these conversations predate 1989 and at one time, there were twelve suggestions for that particular project, none of which were accepted. He then added that he would pass the word along to Randy Wingfield, Christiansburg's Planner.

E. Long Range Plan update

This project is behind; however, Joe Springer has promised results in the next few weeks. We need baseline population data from Parsons before going to work with the Planners. The MPO will be doing some traffic modeling for the South Main Task Force in the near future. These efforts will all be applicable to the 2035 Long Range Plan.

F. Other Items

Request for comments for the VTrans2035 Plan

Dan distributed copies of the comments he submitted for the VTrans2035 draft plan and explained them to the group, then asked if any other comments need to be added. David shared that the Salem Area Traffic Engineering is applying for \$800,000 in safety funds for signal installation at the RT 8 to I-81 interchange. Doug commented that the RT 8 and I-81 interchange was terrible and asked if anyone was going to do anything about it. Dan replied that yes, VDOT has that project already identified and we are awaiting VDOT's programming of that work. Doug next asked if the Christiansburg had any plans for starting phase two of the RT 114 upgrade to which Lance replied that they were currently looking for funds in hopes of keeping the project going. Craig asked for the reason the RT 114 upgrade started at the mid-point to which Lance answered that a look at accident data in the area dictated the starting point, with the more serious accidents having occurred in the area in the middle.

Christiansburg Bus Service Updates

Becky discussed the Christiansburg Bus Expansion Service kickoff tentatively set to occur on November 23rd. She also passed out draft brochures that explained the proposed routes, gave a brief overview of the routes, and promised to send out more information concerning this when plans firm up. Debbie asked about fares for the Christiansburg Bus Service and Becky answered that the service would be free until January 1st, then public meetings would be held in Christiansburg to gather input on fixing the fares with Blacksburg ultimately having to approve the final rates. Lance then suggested that Becky discuss the proposed fees and she answered by listing them.

Dan advised of a transit study currently beginning for Warm Hearth Village. Becky added that BT was working with both Warm Hearth and the Montgomery Hospital to assess what their needs are and suggest how to meet them.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Kevin shared the positive news that the Employability Study which ended last spring had earned two awards from NADO (The National Association for Development Organizations) for innovation and excellence in rural transportation. This suggests that the concept of moving people from rural to urban areas for employment has been gaining some traction to move forward in the future.

XI. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is November 5, 2009 at 2:00 PM in the Montgomery County Government Center.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 PM

Lance Terpenney, Chairman